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East Timor *Action* Network

1998 Annual Report

1998 was an historic year for the people of Indonesia. In the midst of a devastating economic crisis and heightened military repression, they rose up nonviolently and overthrew President-General Suharto, who had brutally ruled Indonesia for 32 years. There is a temporary widening of democratic space, and Suharto's chosen successor, B.J. Habibie, is clearly transitional. Indonesia could evolve toward multi-party democracy, or it could relapse into dictatorship. There are tremendous opportunities for change, which must be utilized while they exist.

This 23rd year of Indonesia's military occupation of East Timor, was historic there as well. Suharto's ouster removed the patron of the invasion from power, and established a fragile government in Jakarta susceptible to local and international pressure. Although the future is far from clear and the military still pulls many strings, Habibie wants to resolve East Timor's situation soon, and he is more open to serious discussion than his predecessor was.

In the United States, 1998 marked a turning point in government policy toward East Timor and Indonesia, and ETAN's work was key to that change. As Suharto came under pressure from within, his regime was weakened by the suspension of U.S. military training and by Congressionally-imposed restrictions on U.S. weapons sales. After Suharto's fall, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a resolution for a self-determination referendum in East Timor, and the House adopted similar language.

During 1998, ETAN supplemented our three permanent paid staff (Washington Representative Lynn Fredriksson, Field Organizer Kristin Sundell, and Media/Outreach Coordinator John Miller) with Constâncio Pinto, who represents the East Timorese resistance in North America. Constâncio spent eight months on our staff, speaking around the country and meeting with Washington policy-makers. He has begun graduate studies but continues to work closely with us. For the last half of the year, we added a temporary second staffer in our Washington Office. Funds permitting, we would like to make that position permanent, and are considering further expansion to efficiently use heightened awareness during this critical period.

In addition to Constâncio's travelling and speaking, ETAN organized a fall tour with Fernando de Araujo, leader of the East Timorese student organization RENETIL. Fernando was released from Indonesian prison last March, after serving 6½ years for organizing a peaceful protest in Jakarta. In November, he was accompanied by Yeni Damayanti, who leads a new Indonesia-based East Timor solidarity organization.

During the winter and spring, ETAN worked, successfully, to end unquestioning U.S. government support for Suharto. We arranged Congressional hearings for Indonesian dissidents, and maintained close communication with groups in Jakarta. Our expertise and contacts were also

helpful to journalists learning about Indonesia and East Timor for the first time. Although East Timor remains our principal focus, we work closely with Indonesian-Americans and others to facilitate activism on Indonesia-related human rights issues.

In March, ETAN and journalist/activist Allan Nairn exposed the fact that U.S. Marines and soldiers have trained soldiers in Indonesia every few months since Congress banned military training for Indonesia in 1992. Our Jakarta and Washington press conferences energized Congress and the media, forcing the Pentagon to suspend the program. Congress later banned taxpayer-funded military training worldwide for any unit guilty of human rights violations.

Indonesia's economic crisis – created by foreign investors and exacerbated by Suharto's avarice and corruption – causes tremendous hardship in both Indonesia and East Timor. It also provides new levers to push Indonesia toward democracy. ETAN works with other groups to impose human rights conditions on IMF bailouts, while encouraging emergency aid (not strings-attached loans) for those hardest hit by the crisis.

ETAN was formed seven years ago, following the November 12, 1991 massacre at the Santa Cruz cemetery, when Indonesian soldiers killed at least 271 unarmed East Timorese demonstrators in Dili, East Timor. We agree with the East Timorese resistance that changing U.S. government policy is key to Indonesia's withdrawal from East Timor and to achieving East Timorese self-determination.

During 1998, ETAN's mailing list grew from 6800 to 8500. We have chapters in Arizona, Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Chicago, Colorado, Florida, Houston, Indiana, Los Angeles, Madison, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Missouri, New York, Philadelphia, Portland, Providence, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington DC, as well as at colleges across the United States. We held activist training conferences in Chicago and San Francisco, and more are planned for other parts of the country.

More than 50 activists attended ETAN's National Strategy Conference over Halloween weekend, assessing the situation and developing new campaigns. We will adapt to the accelerating rate of change and to democratic openings in East Timor and Indonesia, by stepping up our activities and working more closely with East Timorese not in exile. At least a dozen ETAN activists visited Indonesia and East Timor during 1998; we are exploring a more systematic and continuous presence of foreign observers.

The next two years will be critical for both East Timor and Indonesia, and we plan to meet that challenge. After 32 years of U.S. backing for dictatorship in Jakarta and 23 years of U.S. support for occupation in East Timor, people here owe it to the people in East Timor to help preserve the democratic space so that they can finish what they have begun. Our job is first to get the U.S. out of the way – and then to move our country to the right side. Then we can go out of business.

Changing U.S. government policy

- ✓ Worked with U.S. Senators and staff to unanimously pass Senate Resolution 237, which supports an internationally-supervised referendum on East Timor's political status.
- ✓ Advocated for House Concurrent Resolution 258, which also supports a referendum. Although this bill didn't pass, the House approved similar language to accompany the 1999 Foreign Aid Appropriations Act.
- ✓ Exposed the JCET (Joint Combined Exchange Training) program in which U.S. soldiers trained Indonesian special forces in a variety of terror tactics. After ETAN and Justice for All's Washington and Jakarta press conferences, the media and Congress reacted with outrage, and the Pentagon was forced to suspend JCET for Indonesia.
- ✓ Continued the Congressional ban on IMET military training, and worked for a similar bans on all related training (H.R.3802 and H.R.4874). These bills didn't pass in 1998, so similar legislation will be proposed next year. However, the Pentagon is now mandated to report to Congress on all current or planned overseas military training.
- ✓ Supported the Leahy amendment which was enacted in the Defense Appropriations Act. It withholds U.S. funding from training programs for foreign military units which have committed human rights violations.
- ✓ Initiated a Congressional Human Rights Caucus hearing in late March with Indonesian opposition leader Amien Rais (who spoke for a referendum in East Timor), recent ETAN visitors to East Timor, and human rights experts.
- ✓ Helped organize the visit of Pius Lustrilanang, an Indonesian activist who was "disappeared" and tortured by the military in early 1998, then released with a death threat to keep him silent about his ordeal. Pius fled Indonesia (he returned in July) and came to Washington and New York.
- ✓ Facilitated an April Congressional Human Rights Subcommittee hearing with torture survivors and activists from Aceh (Western Sumatra), East Timor, and Indonesia. Chairman Chris Smith (R-NJ) was so moved by the hearing that he went to Indonesia a few weeks later, meeting with just-promoted President Habibie and imprisoned East Timorese leader Xanana Gusmão.
- ✓ Re-enacted the hard-won 1997 ban on the use of U.S.-supplied weapons in East Timor.
- ✓ Maintained the ban on U.S. export of small arms to Indonesia, which includes armored vehicles and helicopter-mounted weapons.
- ✓ Joined with many other groups to challenge the role of the I.M.F. in the Asian financial crisis, press for human rights conditions on I.M.F. loans to Indonesia, and oppose the I.M.F. bailing out Suharto's dying regime.
- ✓ Expanded our Washington office. Lynn Fredriksson is the full-time representative, maintaining contact with key Congressional and State Department personnel and activist organizations. Constâncio Pinto helped out for much of the year, and Simon Doolittle worked for the last few months of the Congressional session. Numerous interns and volunteers multiply the energies of this office.

✓Brought twenty activists from around the country to Washington for our fifth annual "Lobby Days." We met with more than 100 Congressional offices during an intensive April week and repeated such visits throughout the year in Washington and in their districts. Lobby Days was coordinated with School of the Americas (SOA) Watch.

✓Encouraged numerous Congressional letters and other vehicles. House International Relations Committee Chair Benjamin Gilman (R-NY) wrote Secretary of State Albright urging support for UN efforts on East Timor and for a policy change that "the U.S. does not regard the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia as irreversible."

✓Convinced the U.S. to sponsor a resolution on East Timor at the Human Rights Commission in Geneva. The resolution was later withdrawn in favor of a negotiated agreement.

✓Successfully petitioned the California Democratic Party to include a call for a UN-sponsored referendum in East Timor in its 1998 platform, including a halt to any and all forms of military support for Indonesia.

Keeping up the pressure

✓Demonstrated at Indonesian government facilities in the U.S. before and after Suharto fell, as well as on the November 12 anniversary of the 1991 Dili massacre, the July 17 anniversary of Indonesia's 1976 "integration" of East Timor, and in response to atrocities in East Timor and Indonesia.

✓Worked with American, international and Indonesian movements campaigning against sweatshop labor, environmental devastation, economic oppression, anti-democratic practices and other injustices enforced or permitted by the Jakarta regime. Demonstrated at the I.M.F. offices at the U.N. in coalition with other groups concerned with global economic justice.

✓Analyzed and released confidential Indonesian military documents to the U.S. press, proving that Indonesia was increasing its military presence in East Timor. The documents, which were simultaneously released in Europe and Australia, demonstrate the pervasive military presence in East Timor, the close control of paramilitary and vigilante groups by the army, and that troop levels were double what Indonesia claimed.

✓Initiated and supplied testimony, expertise, and grassroots support for selective purchasing laws enacted by Cambridge (MA) and Berkeley (CA). These laws restrict cities from doing business with companies who sell weapons to Indonesia or actively support the occupation of East Timor. Similar bills are pending in other states and cities.

Providing resources and information

✓Published two issues of *Estafeta*. The latest issue of our newsletter went to more than 10,000 East Timor supporters worldwide.

✓Launched our web site at http://www.etan.org, a rapidly growing, frequently updated source of news and information about East Timor issues in the U.S., at the U.N., and worldwide. Volunteer Frank Fitzgerald maintains the site.

✓Released statements analyzing the Indonesian economic crisis, the IMF bailout of the Suharto regime, the uninspiring record of change under Habibie, violence against Chinese women and other Indonesians, and other matters.

✓Issued many Action Alerts by fax, e-mail, and postal mail. Our network continues to grow as many other groups redistribute our materials.

✓Distributed press releases, photographs, backgrounders, columns and other information to many media contacts, and organized several press conferences. ETAN-released news motivated at least four articles in the *New York Times* , including one on the front page.

✓Dozens of ETAN activists published op-eds or letters to the editor in major newspapers and magazines and spoke on radio talk shows. Following their visit to East Timor, Field Organizer Kristin Sundell and Chicago chapter coordinator Brad Simpson wrote an op-ed for the *Washington Times*.

✓Facilitated *Washington Post* op-eds by imprisoned East Timorese resistance leader Xanana Gusmão (October) and ETAN staffer Constâncio Pinto (April).

✓Supplied information to Congressional and State Department staff, the UN Secretariat, journalists and others visiting East Timor or Indonesia. We also reach people inside; ETAN press releases are published in East Timorese newspapers.

✓Organized a fact-finding delegation to Indonesia and East Timor in March, with Global Exchange and Justice for All, which published a report "Indonesia and East Timor: On the Verge of Change?"

✓Responded to requests about East Timor, including writing book chapters and other materials for publishers and groups worldwide.

✓Distributed printed and audiovisual materials, including many hard to obtain here. Ask for our resource list.

✓Conducted workshops at activist, human rights, student and religious conferences hosted by groups who now include East Timor among their concerns.

✓Managed Internet mailing lists on East Timor, Indonesia and West Papua.

Building awareness and effectiveness

✓Organized speaking tours for Constâncio Pinto and Fernando de Araujo.

✓Worked with Global Exchange on a November tour for Fernando de Araujo and Indonesian woman activist Yeni Damayanti.

✓Worked with Solidarity on an August tour by Indonesian PRD international representative Edwin Gozal.

✓Arranged public events for Pius Lustrilanang and other short-term visitors.

✓Provided videos, photo exhibits, speakers and other resources to college and community groups across the U.S. ETAN has several professionally-produced exhibitions available to show in your community.

Strengthening the movement

✓Organized regional training conferences in Chicago (April) and San Francisco (October) to empower young activists and share experiences and strategies. Roughly 40 people attended each training.

✓Covered the country: Field Organizer Kristin Sundell, based in Chicago, traveled widely. At each stop, she met with local ETAN and other activists, journalists and community leaders to build a base for East Timor organizing.

✓Worked with emerging East Timor support groups in the religious, labor and Portuguese-American communities. In Washington, we have relationships with arms control, labor, academic, economic justice and human rights groups.

✓Joined with Chinese-Indonesians and Acehnese in the U.S. to protest human rights abuses by the Indonesian military. ETAN shares our contacts and organizing skills with Indonesian-Americans who are becoming politically active.

✓Continued to work with a wide range of religious organizations. The Methodist Church made Indonesia a priority in 1998; ETAN provided material for dozens of study groups and delegations.

✓Held a National Strategy Conference in Freedom, New Hampshire, attended by more than 50 people.

✓Tightened up our Executive, Personnel and Steering Committees to streamline ETAN's decision-making and internal operations.

✓Incorporated ETAN, Inc. in the State of New York.

Thinking and acting globally

✓Represented the International Federation for East Timor (IFET) at the United Nations, including arranging meetings between East Timorese and U.N. representatives. We also work closely with Parliamentarians for East Timor.

✓Officially joined the Asia-Pacific Coalition on East Timor (APCET), and participated in its conference in Bangkok (February) and steering committee meeting in Jakarta (August).

✓Organized a letter and press release to the June "tripartite talks" at the UN between Portugal and Indonesia, urging them to keep East Timorese self-determination in mind as they discussed "autonomy."

✓Many ETAN activists visited East Timor and Indonesia during 1998, bringing back first-hand observations, organizing ideas and feedback. We have strong ties with the mushrooming number of activist organizations in both countries.

✓Began to formalize projects to bring East Timorese products to the U.S. for sale, including hand-woven cloth. We are considering material aid to projects in East Timor.

✓Testified at the United Nations Committee on Decolonization. ETAN arranged housing, clerical support and presenters for more than 30 petitioning organizations from around the world.

✓Helped with logistical support and contacts for East Timorese leaders visiting the United States.

Financial Report, Calendar Year 1998*

ETAN/US has two full-time and one ¾-time paid staffers. Several temporary staff in 1998 added up to an additional salary line. Our National Coordinator and many other active volunteers and interns work without pay. In addition to our office on Capitol Hill and shared space in Chicago, we use donated national (White Plains and chapter offices. Consequently, we accomplish much more than most groups with a $185,000 annual budget. The figures below consolidate all national ETAN-related work, and are not a formal statement for ETAN, Inc. Local chapters raise and spend their own money.

Category	Income	Expense	Net
Rent		8,150	-8,150
Sales	10,554	8,933	1,621
Grants	155,226	2,217	153,009
Donations	31,812	10,908	20,904
Printing		6,726	-6,726
Postage		7,897	-7,897
Phone & internet		11,410	-11,410
Speaking tours	4,166	6,008	-1,842
Legal & accounting		3,300	-3,300
Supplies		4,506	-4,506
Personnel		97,907	-97,907
Travel		7,259	-7,259
Estafeta	284	8,889	-8,605
Office equipment		738	-738
Regional trainings	474	3,083	-2,609
National Strategy mtg.	3,935	6,580	-2,645
Total	$206,451	$194,511	$11,940

*This report is being prepared in mid-December, so many figures are estimates.

The educational work of ETAN is a project of the WESPAC Foundation which can accept tax-deductible contributions of $50 or more. Other donations should be made out to "ETAN."

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Mission Statement

The East Timor *Action* Network/United States supports genuine self-determination and human rights for the people of East Timor in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1960 United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Decolonization, and Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on East Timor. Our primary focus is to change U.S. foreign policy and raise public awareness to support self-determination for East Timor.